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SUBJECT: FEBRUARY 23 MFA PRESS BRIEFING: IRAN, JAPAN- CHINA  
EAST CHINA SEA, TAIWAN, IPR, PA-HAMAS

#### Summary

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11. Key points at the February 23 MFA press briefing were as follows:

- MFA Vice Foreign Minister Lu Guozeng will visit Iran February 24-26 for a working visit. He will discuss PRC-Iran political and bilateral issues, exchange views on the nuclear question and discuss what steps could be taken to resolve the crisis.

- Chen Shui-bian's independence moves are "dangerous" signals. Other countries must be alert in order to avoid destabilizing the situation in the Taiwan Strait.

- China and Japan will hold talks in Beijing in early March on their East China Sea natural gas field dispute.

- China is making efforts to combat intellectual piracy but due to the state of development of the country, there are still some IPR piracy problems.

- China is opposed to countries giving a platform to the "splittist activities" of the Dalai Lama.

- Religious figures such as Bishop Joseph Zen of Hong Kong should not interfere in political matters.

- The United States and China often share views on exchange rates at all levels.

- Beijing hopes to retain good relations with Palestine and the Palestinian people, opposes actions that would make life harder for the Palestinians and would consider aid to the Palestinians if asked.

- Beijing hopes Iraq can develop effective police and military forces, determine its own fate and work towards reconstruction of the country and its economy.

- China's scientific activities in Antarctica are geared toward a better understanding of the planet and its environment.

End Summary.

Iranian Nuclear Talks

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12. Asked to comment on the Iran situation during the regular February 23 MFA press briefing, MFA Spokesperson Liu Jianchao called for the international community to exercise patience and restraint and take positive steps to resolve the crisis. Lu announced that MFA Vice Foreign Minister Lu Guozeng will visit Iran February 24-26 for a working visit. He will discuss PRC-Iran political and bilateral issues, exchange views on the nuclear question and discuss what steps could be taken as well as exchange opinions on regional issues. China and Iran have normal, friendly, cooperative relations with many joint interests in economic and trade matters, Liu said. He said he had no information on reports that China NDRC Chairman Ma Kai would visit Iran to ink a new energy deal in advance of possible international sanctions.

Taiwan: NUC Abolition "Dangerous"  
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13. In response to a question from the Bloomberg correspondent, Liu said that Taiwan President Chen Shui-bian's unilateral independence moves such as abolishing the National Unification Council are "dangerous" signals. Beijing seeks to maintain cross-strait peace and stability, Liu said. Other countries must be alert in order to avoid destabilizing the Taiwan Strait situation. Asked what specific steps China would take in response to unilateral moves by Taiwan, Liu said he would not answer a hypothetical question.

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China-Japan East China Sea, Trade Talks  
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14. China and Japan will hold a fourth round of consultations in Beijing in early March to discuss the East China Sea natural gas field dispute, Liu announced.

15. Japanese Economy, Trade and Industry Minister Toshihiro Nikai signed agreements with China on trade and economic cooperation, energy, environmental protection and bilateral investment during his February 21-23 visit. Liu stated he had not heard of any reports that Nikai invited PRC Premier Wen Jiabao to Japan. He stressed that Japan should treat history correctly and abide by its three joint political documents on one China.

IPR Piracy: Problems Due to State of Development, MFA Clean  
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16. Asked about the state of anti-intellectual piracy efforts and rumors that MFA uses pirated software, Liu said that China is making efforts to combat intellectual piracy. There are still some IPR piracy problems due to the state of development of the country. Liu declared that MFA takes a responsible attitude on IPR and uses no pirated software.

The Dalai Lama and Bishop Joseph Zen  
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17. Asked for comment on the Dalai Lama's Middle East trip, Liu said that the PRC is firmly opposed to countries giving a platform to the splittist activities of the Dalai Lama.

18. In response to a question on the elevation to Cardinal of Hong Kong Bishop Joseph Zen, Liu said

religious figures should not interfere in politics.

#### Dollar-Renminbi

¶9. Asked about the upcoming visit of Under Secretary of the Treasury for International Affairs Tim Adams, Liu said that China and the United States routinely exchange views on currency rates at all levels.

#### Aid to Palestinian Authority/Hamas

¶10. In response to the Al-Jazeera correspondent's question about the cutoff of U.S. funding and the future of PRC aid to the Palestinian Authority under Hamas, Liu stated that Beijing hopes to maintain good relations with Palestine and the Palestinian people, opposes actions that make life harder for the Palestinians and would consider aid to the Palestinians if asked.

#### Iraq Stability and Reconstruction

¶11. China recognizes that Iraq remains unstable, Liu said. Beijing hopes Iraq can develop effective police and military forces, determine its own fate and work towards reconstruction of the country and its economy.

#### The Antarctic

¶12. Asked about China's activities in Antarctica, Liu said that PRC scientific activities in Antarctica are geared toward a better understanding of the planet and its environment.  
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